

**TOPIC: DEGREE AUTHORIZATION ACT: ECPI UNIVERSITY–
REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION AS A PLACE OF BUSINESS**

**PREPARED BY: HEATHER DELANGE, ACADEMIC POLICY OFFICER,
DIVISION OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

I. SUMMARY

This item recommends authorization as a place of business (with no instruction provided in Colorado) for ECPI University to operate an administrative office in Colorado pursuant to the Degree Authorization Act. “ECPI University” is the official name of the institution.

II. BACKGROUND

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education has statutory responsibility for administration of Title 23, Article 2 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, commonly referred to as the Degree Authorization Act. The Act sets out the terms by which the Commission may authorize properly accredited private colleges and universities, out-of-state public colleges and universities, and seminaries and bible colleges to offer degrees or degree credits in Colorado. Persons or organizations that violate the provisions of the statute are subject to legal penalties. These institutions must receive authorization by the Commission prior to offering any program of instruction, academic credits, or degrees; opening a place of business; soliciting students or enrollees; or offering educational support services. Pursuant to state law, a private college or university is required to be accredited on the basis of an on-site review in Colorado by a nationally recognized regional or national accrediting association.

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

ECPI University is applying for authorization to operate a place of business, in the form of an administrative office, in Colorado. ECPI University is a private, for-profit postsecondary institution located in Virginia Beach, Virginia. ECPI University has been accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), one of the six regional accreditors recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, since 1998.

ECPI University submitted information regarding the activities that occur in its administrative office located within Colorado. Department staff determined that the activities that ECPI University describes for the Colorado office do not necessitate the need for full authorization. Rather, the proposed activities meet the definition for the authorization of a place of business. The definition for authorization as a place of business allows an institution to operate out of a Colorado office so long as the site does not offer instruction. Specifically, the Colorado office of ECPI University uses the office space to house admissions, financial aid, and student services advisors to work for ECPI’s online campus.

The location in Colorado allows the University to add additional staff to provide more expanded hours of operation to serve online students located in the Mountain and Pacific Time Zones. The initial plan is to have 6-8 staff members with a supervisor; long term, to employ a maximum of 15-20 people. There will not be in-person meetings in the Colorado offices. Currently, there are six students, all military personnel, domiciled in Colorado enrolled in the ECPI University online campus.

Pursuant to Section I, Part J, of the approved CCHE policies, institutions awarded the place of business authorization must renew annually to ensure that the activities occurring from the Colorado site do not trigger the need for full authorization. Additionally, institutions authorized under the place of business status are subject to the deceptive trade practices provision as found in 23-2-104, C.R.S.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission approve authorization as a place of business for ECPI University.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. §23-2-103.3